

DECISION MEMO

Upper Brushy Stewardship Project Midstory Removal FY 2009 - 2012

USDA, Forest Service
Bankhead National Forest - National Forests in Alabama
Winston County and Lawrence County, Alabama

Decision

I have decided to conduct mechanical removal of understory and midstory vegetation on approximately 491 acres (7 areas). These treatment areas are located in T9S, R7W, Sections 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 18 and T8S, R7W, Sections 20, 29, and 34. They are in the Moreland, Grayson, and Pine Torch communities in Winston and Lawrence Counties, Alabama. These sites are located in Area 1 and 2 of the Forest Health and Restoration Project, National Forests in Alabama, Bankhead National Forest ([FHRP](#)). The sites are within Management Prescription 7.E.2, Dispersed Recreation Areas with Vegetation Management, of the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Alabama ([RLRMP](#)).

The purpose of this project is to move toward desired fuel condition class, improve wildlife and native plant habitat, and facilitate restoration of fire adapted woodland desired conditions as identified by the ([FHRP](#)).

Midstory Removal

This treatment will use mechanical equipment and hand tools to mow, mulch, and/or cut understory and midstory brush and trees up to six inches in diameter (DBH) from selected stands. This treatment will improve wildlife and native plant habitat, and facilitate restoration of fire adapted woodlands desired conditions as identified by the ([FHRP](#)).



Example of Current Condition



Example of Expected Result

The following areas will be treated:

Compartment	Stand	Acres	Treatment Method
31	2, 3 & 4	181	Mulching Machine or Chainsaw
21	8	50	Chainsaw
21	19	61	Chainsaw
32	10	27	Chainsaw
32	19	70	Chainsaw
38	2	32	Chainsaw
33	13	70	Chainsaw

Rational for the Decision

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or EA because it is consistent with the following categories from Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30:

Section 31.2 (6) - Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service Level D).

I find that this project is appropriate for categorical exclusion within these categories because no extraordinary circumstances exist as defined in FSH 1909.15, 30.3.2.

1. *Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.* – The project area has been surveyed for threatened, endangered or sensitive plants and animals (TES). The biological evaluation for the midstory treatment ([BE](#)) was completed and the determination was “No Effect” on T & E species requiring no further consultation, and “No Impact” on Sensitive species.
2. *Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.* – The proposed action is not in a floodplain, wetland, or municipal watershed, and forest plan standards are implemented to prevent off site impacts.
3. *Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas.* – No congressionally designated areas are within the project area.
4. *Inventoried roadless areas.* – No part of the project area is designated as inventoried roadless area or potential wilderness areas.
5. *Research natural areas.* – The project area does not contain a designated or proposed RNA.
6. *American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites or Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.* – A cultural resource survey has been conducted on the portion of the project area where ground disturbing activities may occur. A report was sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). No properties that are eligible or

potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are within the treatment area. Therefore, the proposed treatment will have no impact on significant cultural resources.

Mitigation measures that are listed in the [FHRP](#) (pp 48-51) and those addressed in the [RLRMP](#) will be followed.

Public Involvement and Analysis

Scoping with the public was accomplished on this proposal with a notice published in the Northwest Alabamian on May 5, 2007. A letter was mailed to the district mailing list on May 1, 2007, to notify the general public about the proposal. A legal advertisement establishing formal notice and comment period for this project was published in the Northwest Alabamian on March 4, 2009. Additionally, a letter notifying interested parties of the formal notice and comment period was mailed to the District mailing list on February 26, 2009. One comment in support of the project was received.

Findings Required by Other Law

National Forest Management Act - My decision is based on an analysis of the situation and this action is consistent with the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests in Alabama [RLRMP](#), Goals and Objectives.

Implementation

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12 (e)(1), this decision is not subject to appeal. Implementation of this decision may begin upon publication of the decision in the paper of record (*Northwest Alabamian*). For further information, contact District Ranger Glen Gaines, Bankhead National Forest, PO Box 278, Double Springs, AL or at (205) 489-5111.

/s/ Charles Price

for

GLEN D. GAINES

District Ranger

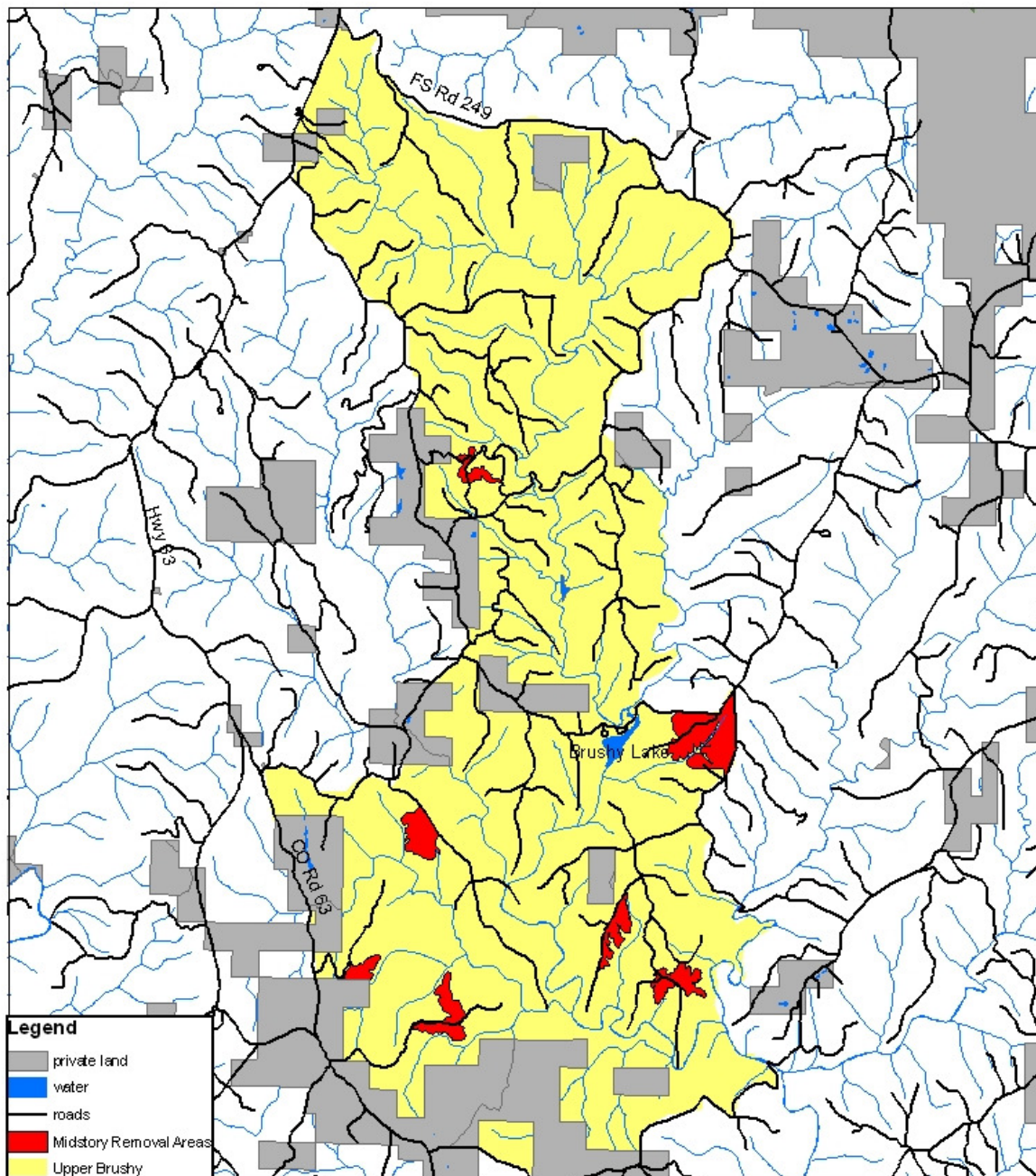
Bankhead National Forest

April 24, 2009

Date

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Bankhead National Forest, Alabama
Upper Brushy Stewardship Project #2
Midstory Removal
Vicinity Map



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